

Minutes: Master Plan Steering Committee – July 22, 2020 – Virtual Meeting

Committee Members attending: Janne Corneil, Stacy Lennon. Barbara (Barney) Arnold, Madeleine Blake, Kerry Kissinger, Tanya White, Angie Verge, Bob Zogg, John Ballantine, Eva Mostoufi, Lynne Lipinsky.

Absent: Jason Molten, Jessica Nierenberg.

Also in Attendance: George Mansfield, Gretchen Caywood, Christina Christodouloupoulos (Hemlock Hill Rd), David Freedman (Hutchins Rd), Dave Model (BOS), Lauren Demoy (Studio G Architects) and Carren Panico (Mosquito).

Janne Corneil called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

CivicMoxie resignation

Janne explained that Susan Silberberg of CM had sent a letter on Friday 7/10/20 stepping down from the project, and noting that they will provide the Phase II deliverables, but cannot complete the scope and demands. Janne said that since we had put CM on hold in early March due to Covid, it seemed reasonable that another 4 months would be needed to complete the work – something that had been discussed with CM and seemingly agreed upon. Janne added that it had become evident that there was also a misalignment in theirs and our interpretation of the scope of the MP work.

On behalf of the PB, of which she is Chair, Madeleine thanked the MPSC for the tremendous amount of hard work that the MPSC has been doing, and continues to do, and expressed her and the PB's appreciation. Stacy pointed out that this is the first time we are collecting the institutional knowledge in one place in the Town, in the Existing Conditions reports, and that this is a tremendous accomplishment that will definitively benefit the Town.

On discussion, many Committee members saw this separation as a beneficial event at this time, as the MPSC can move forward from this spot at their own timetable. Barbara pointed out that provision by CM of the Phase II deliverables will leave the Committee at a good spot. Janne expressed some concerns and offered to step aside and allow someone else to take the helm if they so desired. However, several Committee members spoke adamantly concerning the excellent quality of Janne's hard work, guidance and experience in this MP process, adding that Carlisle is very different from other towns, and perhaps CM did not have enough understanding of that coming into the process.

Janne summarized some of the higher-level tasks underway by the MPSC: finalizing the Existing Conditions reports, refining key takeaways, and identifying issues to feed into the analysis of values and vision for the MP. She added that CM's promise of deliverables through Phase II includes land use opportunities analysis, development potential analysis, opportunities for housing, and how our existing zoning tools work relative to the potential for future development in Carlisle. She noted that it will be difficult to move forward without the land use analysis from CM, adding that this analysis is now expected to be provided in mid-August.

The Committee discussed how to proceed with the public process aspect of the plan in the context of Covid. Janne noted that once the student interns have designed the interactive site, how do we build on what they have done? She posed the same question regarding the survey. Do we need to hire outside assistance? She further pointed out that this MP must factor in Covid and cannot be blind to it.

Options for the MP process going forward

In preparation for tonight's discussion, Janne had presented 5 possible options for the MP process for the Committee's consideration. These ranged from hiring a new MP consultant to complete the remaining scope to the MPSC mothballing the MP project at this point. She noted that she had received feedback from many Committee members on the choices, with no one choosing these options at either end of the spectrum. Most of the feedback was for option 2 (hire a new consultant to complete a revised scope) and option 3 (hire subcontractor(s) for specific MP tasks).

Madeleine said that she finds it hard to settle on one alternative until we have the materials from CM and suggested discussing options and determining what additional information we need to make this decision. Kerry suggested a possible 6th option which could be to temporarily mothball the process and pick it up later as an all-volunteer effort – a pause in the process - waiting until the budget situation is less uncertain. Janne suggested the Committee could focus on the framework of options to go forward with when things fall into place budget-wise.

Kerry expressed concern with implementation at this point, adding that community input is the next big push, but that due to Covid he does not see this happening until Q4 2020. Resident David Freedman concurred, noting that conducting a survey at this point seems ill-timed. He said that the whole world is an unknown at this point regarding the global economy, and it affects many aspects of the framework from which people will be making their decisions and providing survey input. He said that with people feeling very insecure and unsure, it will be difficult to get input and decisions from residents. Stacy added that a pause in gathering input from residents during this time may help with getting better input, and therefore a better and more accepted product.

David suggested putting the MP on hold until Covid is over, but getting information out to the residents about what the Committee has learned thus far, adding that since it will take time to compile the information into presentable form, the Committee should put out a statement to residents that our consultant has resigned, and we are digesting and compiling the information we have, adding that we are determining the best route forward at this time. He added that once a route forward is chosen, the Committee should present that information to Boards and Committees.

With many concerned about losing momentum, Madeleine suggested a compromise of spending the rest of this year doing what work can be done, then conducting outreach early next year. Barney expressed concern that the Town will continue to not have guide for decision making at this time, but that decisions still must be made. She said that there is tremendous value in sharing the work that they have done, and to push forward with a framework that people can confirm or not confirm. Barbara urged moving ahead and figuring out the best way to do these things. Janne agreed that the information should be organized and put forward as essential tools for decision making. Kerry suggested creating a new workplan and getting it out to the town.

Janne suggested that the Committee decide what work can be done now but agreed that the MP should not be completed in this time when the Town cannot make certain decisions. She suggested putting energy into an infrastructure for communication that reaches every household and creating the data and analysis tools within our own community so that we can do the analyses we feel we need to do. Janne said we can keep the town apprised of activities and hold remote events. Members agreed with this approach. Madeleine reported that an application for a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP)

grant has just been filed on behalf of the Town, and that if the grant is received, the work will include an 8 hour community outreach workshop in the fall – a potential opportunity for collecting additional MP input.

Concerning the communication of the current MP process status to the residents, Madeleine suggested that as the Committee presents the information to various Boards/Committees, it will be captured by the Mosquito. Kerry suggested reengaging the Master Plan Working Group (MPWG) to help get the word out.

Janne offered that she, Madeleine and Barney will refine and consolidate the comments on the matrix of possible paths forward for discussion at the next meeting, with the hope of reaching a consensus on that path at that time. A letter to the editor was suggested for the Mosquito once the MPSC has decided upon a path forward, and a possible mailer to every household.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Gretchen Caywood